

The Miraculous Muse



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Cover photo by Mads Schmidt Rasmussen

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Acknowledgement

Special thanks to three people who helped make this collection appreciably better with their editing and proof-reading efforts: Syadia Arina, Nurul Nadiah and Atiqah Nazir.

Also to Nouman Ali Khan and Hamza Yusuf, whose lectures inspired me greatly in writing essays for this eBook. I refer to their lectures in the process of writing the articles.

Also to Pengiran Faezul for reviewing all discussion, Quran and hadith inserts in this eBook. As a learner myself, I could not possibly publish this eBook without the review from subject matter expert.

Also, a big thank you to our readers. We appreciate you. We write these words for you.

“You are not a drop in the ocean.

You are the entire ocean, in a drop.”

- Rumi

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01

KNOWING BY MIND VS KNOWING BY HEART

The story below is taken from the lecture: [Nouman Ali Khan - Why and How to Learn Arabic for Comprehension of the Quran](#)

A kid once asked what I thought was an incredibly mind-provoking question:

“All the Messengers got ‘cool stuffs’, they got a cane turning into a snake, a dead guy coming back to life, an ocean that completely opens up, and all Prophet Muhammad got is a book”?

The Quran itself is the cool stuff.

The miracle is in His own choice of words. For each verse Allah chose specific words with deliberate grammatical rules to bring out a certain message.

One of the many miracles of the Quran is that, sometimes its messages can't be conveyed in totality through the work of translation.

That is why the Arab companion advised his Arab companions:

“Teach your children Arabic, like you teach them to memorize the Quran.”

I was almost in tears when Ustadh briefly went through the grammar of Surah al-Fatihah. On that day, it was as if my heart admitted that the Quran is not a book written by a human being, but it is a book written by the Creator.

And it is worth noting that 'knowing by mind' vs 'knowing by heart' are 2 very different things.

p/s: A month well spent with Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, learning the Quranic Arabic Grammar (Nahu) and Word Morphology (Sarf).

02

CREATOR (GOD) VS CREATION (HUMAN BEING)

Think about this;

The sun is created by the Creator (God), while the lamp is created by the Creation (Human Being).

The sun lights up the whole part of the earth that faces the sun, while a lamp can only lights up a certain area.

Creations may imitate the creator, but they can never match what the creator has created.



Sun (created by God) vs Lamp (created by Human)

On the other hand, the Quran is written by the Creator, while the translation is written by the Creation.

Can you understand the difference?

Let's give a try at translating Shakespeare's poems into the Malay language.

English:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate

Malay:

Bolehkah saya bandingkan awak dengan hari di musim panas?

Namun ternyata dikau terlebih indah dan lebih menenangkan

Note: For non-Malay speakers, try translating the poem excerpt into your own language.

Apart from converting the words from one language to another, are we able to translate the ‘beauty’ of the work as delicately intended by the original poet/writer/author?

Absolutely not.

The case is similar with the Quran, through translation we may be able to derive some meaning of the verses, but the process of translation is inadequate to recreate the beauty of each word and grammatical rules which Allah has chosen.

11 times in the Quran, Allah describes the Quran as Arabic.

Here is one example from Surah Yusuf [12:2]:



“Indeed, We have sent it down as Arabic Quran in order that you may understand.”

Source:

[1] [Nouman Ali Khan – Why and How to Learn Arabic for Comprehension of the Quran](#)

[2] Photos of stadium – courtesy of [William Ames Photography](#).

03

TRANSLATING MIRACLES

Try to translate this literary piece into English:

(Note: For non-Malay speakers, try to get any poem from your native language and translate it into English.)

Malay:

*Kalau ada jarum yang patah,
Jangan disimpan di dalam peti,
Kalau ada silap dan salah,
Jangan disimpan didalam hati,*

English:

*If there's a broken needle,
Do not keep it in a box,
If there's a mistake,
Do not keep it in the heart.*

We might be able to translate the poem into English, but are we able to translate the beauty of the language as well?

Nope.

Same goes with the Quran.

When somebody translates the Quran, even with their best effort, the most that they are able to capture is merely some parts of the messages. It is impossible to capture the miracle unless we approach it in its original form.

The miracle of the Quran presents itself through the words of Allah. The words that are used are of His own choice. That is what makes the verses so miraculous.

If we try to describe the meaning of a verse in English, we may be able to give an idea that is close to the meaning of that verse.

But we cannot deliver to you its beauty, which is another miracle of that verse.

Once such example could be seen from Surat Muddaththir [74:3].

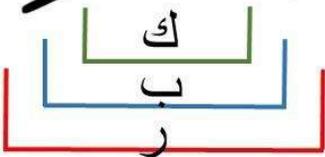
Take a look at how the letters in this verse are spelt the same way backward and forward.

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرُ

Surah Al - Muddaththir
[74 : 3]

Arabic

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرُ



Note:

The letters are spelt the same way
"forward and backward"

As an English tafseer reader, we are able to capture the meaning “*Declare the greatness only of your lord.*”

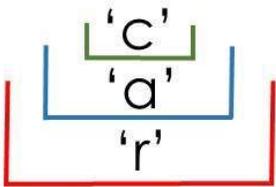
But we would have missed the palindrome if we are not familiar with Arabic letters.

What is “palindrome”?

The letters are spelt the same way
forward and backward.

Example:

racecar



This begs the question:

Are we able to express **وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِيرٌ**

in the same style using other languages like English, French, German, Japanese, Urdu, Malay, etc.?

We can translate the ayah, but can we translate the miracle?

Are we able to express **وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ**
using other languages (English, Malay,
German, Japanese etc.) in the same
style which spells the same way
backward and forward?

We are able to translate **وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ**
into many other languages,
But the translation would not be able
to capture the beauty of "palindrome"

Source:

[Nouman Ali Khan - Why and How to Learn Arabic for
Comprehension of the Quran](#)

04

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM SURAH YUSUF

One of the challenges we might face with the Quran nowadays is; we have been reciting some surah again and again, but do we understand it?

Secure | <https://quran.com/12>

الرَّ تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ١

ABDUL HALEEM
Alif Lam Ra These are the verses of the Scripture that makes things clear—

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ٢

ABDUL HALEEM
We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran so that you [people] may understand.

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
هَذَا الْقُرْءَانَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ
لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ٣

ABDUL HALEEM
We tell you [Prophet] the best of stories in revealing this Quran to you.
Before this you were one of those who knew nothing about them.

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ ٤

ABDUL HALEEM
Joseph said to his father, 'Father, I dreamed of eleven stars and the sun and the moon:
I saw them all bow down before me.'

When we read the Quran, sometimes we don't check the translation or tafseer. We don't even know what we are reciting.

Even when we check for translation, did we pause for a moment and think about it?

For example, in Surah Imran [3:190]: *“Indeed, in the creation of the sky and the earth..”*

Have we ever look up at the sky or at the earth and think about it?

- How can the sky stands by itself without pillars?
- A big house starts with a small brick, what about the sky and earth?
- How can the same rain from the sky brings to the growth of different plants on the earth?

Even when we think about it, do we ponder upon it? For example:

- Al Fatihah: Allah has 99 names, why did He choose Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim in the second verse?
- Al Baqarah: Why did Allah use ‘zaalikal kitaab’ instead of ‘haazal kitab’ in the second verse?

Notes:

Zaalikal kitaab means ‘that book’ : to point out something further;

Haazal kitaab means ‘this book’ : to point out something nearer.

Have we ever thought about these?

“If you do what the Qur’an challenges you to do, to reflect on it deeply, you will arrive at the conclusion that it could not be from other than God.” - Shaykh Hamza Yusuf

The average Muslim, when they say I’m gonna teach my child Quran, they mean two things:- recitation, and memorization.

These two things, recitation and memorization, are both important. However, it is much more rewarding to try and understand what we read as understanding is key to knowing not only by mind, but by the heart

05

RETURN TO WISDOM

“How do we fall asleep right after laying our head onto the pillow?”

That was the question that I raised to [Dr Rizal](#) after attending his lecture on increasing brain performance.

Dr Rizal previously worked as a Sleep Scientist, Principle Consultant Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, to name a few.

In his 10 years of studying, working and living in Australia, extreme cases regarding mental health were also referred to him by the police.

And he replied,

“... That’s why our Prophet asked us to read 3 Qul before sleeping. The advice looked like a religious routine, but the recitation has its own ‘rhythm’. It makes it easier for us to fall asleep....”

“And the same goes for afternoon nap?”

“Yes, it is.”

While driving home after the talk, I did some review with my nephew whom I brought along to the lecture. Dr Rizal also taught us that by repeating the information we have learned, the information will be absorbed easier by our brains.

*“Taking afternoon nap for 27 minutes before Zuhr prayer increases our brain performance by 35%.” *It is also called as Qailulah.*

“Sleeping for 30 minutes before Fajr is equivalent to 3 hours of sleeping.” (We have to wake up for Tahajjud prayer prior to this short nap, after having a deep sleep from 10/11pm-2am)

I had once listened to an [Islamic lecture](#) saying that our Prophet s.a.w. woke up in the middle of the night for additional prayer, and he slept briefly before Fajr.

[Source: [Muhammad Al-Shareef – In The Middle of The Night](#)]

“Performing ablution before sleeping acts as hydrotherapy. We can get into deep sleep easier when our body temperature is decreased to 28c.”

*Medical benefits of ablution can be read in Dr Rizal’s blog:
[Wudu as Brain Stimulant](#)
[Medical Benefits of Wudu](#)
[Ablution as Brain Stimulant](#)

There are many scientific researches that coincide with the Sunnah. Although as Muslim we have learned the Sunnah, however not many are inclined to put this into practice.

Sunnah is not just a Sunnah. Each of them has scientific explanation and health benefits behind it.

Only then I understood why our Prophet s.a.w emphasized in his [last sermon](#):

*“...I leave behind me two things, **the Quran and my example, the Sunnah...**”*

Hamza Yusuf in his khutbah entitled [‘Return To Wisdom’](#), mentioned:

“Wisdom is the ability to act appropriately in any given situation. The word ‘hikmah’, which is wisdom in English, is the word that the Quran uses for Sunnah.

Because the Prophet s.a.w in his Sunnah, he always does the right thing. And in a few times when he didn’t do the right thing, and he was rebuked by Allah, he was actually doing the right thing, but it was not the best thing.

And that’s why he always does the best thing. His censured from Allah s.w.t when he was rebuked in the Quran by Allah. It was because the Hikmah in that situation was to be speaking to the one that want to hear the message, and not the one who wasn’t interested in that message...

*The Prophet, his taufiq from Allah, is that he was always Hakeem. **[2:269]:The one that’s given wisdom is given the great good. [Al-Jumuah:2]: He’s the one who sent among the unlettered people, a Prophet, and he sent him to recite his verses, to purify them, and to teach the book and the wisdom. The hikmah.”***

Imam Syafi’e in his famous book about Usool Fiqh, said the hikmah is the sunnah. You can have knowledge, but knowing how to apply the knowledge is the wisdom. That’s the hikmah. And that’s the difference between those who might know the hukm of Allah as a text and those who know when the hukm of Allah is applicable. That’s wisdom.”

Source:

[Hamza Yusuf – Return to Wisdom](#)

06

THE
CONNECTION
BETWEEN
HEART &
BRAIN AND
ITS EFFECTS
TO OUR
PRAYERS

Note: The explanation below is taken from

[Dr Rizal Abu Bakar - Prophet and Intelligent Heart](#)

[Dr Rizal Abu Bakar - Thinking with the Heart: The Quran and Scientific Proof](#)

Is it the heart that sends a message to the brain, or the brain that sends a message to the heart?

“It is interesting to note that the heart starts beating in the unborn fetus even before the brain has been formed.”

And in fact, in the Quran, Allah relates the heart with understanding or thinking many times.

Surah Al-Munafiqun [63: 3]: *That is because they believed, then disbelieved, therefore their **hearts** are sealed, so they **understand** not.*

What does a **heart** has to do with **understanding**? Isn't it the brain that does the 'thinking' part, which leads to **understanding**?

Another few examples:

Surah Al-An'am [6: 25]: *And of them there are some who listen to you; **but We have set veils on their hearts**, so they **understand it not**, and deafness in their ears; if they see every one of the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) they will not believe therein; to the point that when they come to you to argue with you, the disbelievers say: “These are nothing but tales of the men of old.”*

Surah Al-Isra [17: 46]: *And **We have put coverings over their hearts lest, they should understand it** (the Qur'an), and in their ears deafness. And when you make mention of your Lord Alone [La ilaha ill-Allah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) Islamic Monotheism] in the Qur'an, they turn on their backs, fleeing in extreme dislikeness.*

Surah At-Tawbah [9: 87] : ***Their hearts are sealed up** (from all kinds of goodness and right guidance), **so they understand not.***

Back to the question, **who does the thinking? The heart or the brain?**

Why did Allah relates the heart with understanding in the Quran?

According to science, the heart communicates with the brain and the rest of the body in 4 ways:

1. Neurologically (through transmissions of nerve impulses),
2. Biochemically (through hormones and neurotransmitters),
3. Biophysically (through pressure waves),
4. Energetically (through electromagnetic field interactions).

Through these biological communication systems, **the heart has a significant influence on the function of our brains and all our systems.**

This new scientific evidence shows that the heart uses these methods to send our brain extensive emotional and intuitive signals.

Along with this understanding that the heart is in constant communication with the brain, scientists are discovering that **our hearts may actually be the “intelligent force” behind the intuitive thoughts and feelings we all experience.**

All these findings are nothing less but validation of the authentic saying of Prophet Mohammad s.a.w.,

“Inside the human body there is a morsel of flesh which, if healthy, the whole body is healthy and which, if diseased, the whole body is diseased.” Then he pointed to his heart and said “This piece of flesh is this heart.”

Note: The explanation below is taken from

- [Hamza Yusuf – Crisis of Knowledge](#)
- [Hamza Yusuf – The Human Heart](#)

In Arabic, the word Qalb (qof-lam-ba) is heart, and the word Qabl (qof-ba-lam) is before.



heart



before

Just like the word Ilm ('ain-lam-mim) is knowledge, and the word 'Amal ('ain-mim-lam) is action.

Just switch the last two letters, and we get two different words, and these two are related. Knowledge and action are related to each other.



knowledge



action

But what about Qolb and Qobl? **What does 'heart' has to do with the word 'before'?**

(To answer this, I refer to a lecture by [Hamza Yusuf – Crisis of Knowledge](#))

In Surah Al-A'raf, [7: 172] :

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ
قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

[7 : 172]: *And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, 'Am I not your Lord?' and they replied, 'Yes, we bear witness.' So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this,'*

The heart knows something that it knew before it came into this realm.

We knew a covenant that we took in another dimension, as mentioned in this verse. It was a sacred covenant. And it began with 'alastu birabbikum' - "Am I not your Lord?"

And we replied as spirit, we replied in affirmative, *'bala shahidna' – "Indeed, You are our Lord and we witness to this."*

We were brought into this world, and the world is a place of remembrance. It is to remember the previous existence. It is to recollect, to recall.

This is why we called 'zikrullah' as 'zikrullah' because we are remembering what we are already knew.

'Zikr' means 'remember'. We cannot remember something that we do not know previously.

And this is the highest form of knowledge in our tradition. It is to know our Lord. [Source: [Hamza Yusuf – Crisis of Knowledge](#)]

Every human heart that came in to the world knows to this truth, as we already testified before we were born into this world.

The heart knows who his Lord is. But the nafs has made him forget who his Lord is. And this is because we then become tainted with the dunya.

That is why Allah sent Messengers as a reminder, to remind us who our Lord is.

And now we ask, how do we bring our ibadah to life? The first is to recognize that the spiritual heart has died.

The ibadah is dead. In the middle of prayer, we suddenly ask, *"Did I pray?". "How many rakaah did I pray?"*

One of the spiritual signs that the spiritual heart has died is that the people don't weep. Another sign is when they hear the Quran, it has no impact on their heart.

One of the ways to bring the heart to life is by reading the Quran with reflection.

This is important because we have to know why things happen. Once we understand "Why" Allah has asked us to do this thing.

Understanding, coupled with knowing stemmed from realization of the intellect provides us with greater sense of meaning in our action. As we drive our action understanding the purpose of doing so, the effect is better and definitely not the same as when we just blindly following order.

When we actually believe in something, we have conviction. And when there's conviction, then there's action. And when there's action, there's change. As we change, everything around us will change. So, **reading the Quran with reflection is one of the reasons that Allah bring the life to heart.**

Note: When we read the Quran, begin with ta'wudz. Because we don't want the devil to influence our understanding of the Quran.

As mentioned in Surah An-Nahl [16: 98]:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾

[16 : 98]: *So when you want to recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from Shaitan (Satan), the outcast (the cursed one).*

Source:

1. [Dr Rizal Abu Bakar - Prophet and Intelligent Heart](#)
2. [Dr Rizal Abu Bakar - Thinking with the Heart: The Quran and Scientific Proof](#)
3. [Hamza Yusuf - The Human Heart](#)
4. [Hamza Yusuf - Crisis of Knowledge](#)

07

DO WE
REMEMBER
GOD AS WE
PRAY?

I refer to the lecture "[Foundation of Faith](#)" by Ustadh Nouman.

He mentioned the verse [3:190]

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَأَخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

"No doubt about it, in the creation of the sky and the earth, and the conflict between the night and the day (the night turns into the day, and the day turns into the night), there are miraculous sign (there are clear indication) for people of sound (powerful) mind."

If we truly think about this verse, the sky is pretty incredible. The earth is remarkable.

Those are indeed miraculous signs. But the miraculous signs **can only be seen by those with sound (powerful) mind**. Those with **the ability to think clearly**. A sound mind that is free from vanity.

The Arabic word used is 'Ulul Albab'. Who are the 'Ulul Albab'?

Ulul Albab are the people who have a **mind that is actually free from useless information**.

Nowadays, we get bombarded with a lot of information. Social media, and any other platforms.

What do most people post on Social Media? Are they useful? A cat playing piano?

Human beings tend to appreciate useless information that has no benefit.

The more useless information we take in, the less we are capable of processing good information.

Take one example:-

If we eat a lot of junk food, and we also eat an apple. Will an apple undo all the damage caused by the junk?

If we want to get healthier, we have to start eating healthy food AND also stop eating junk food. Both come hand in hand and a better health could only be achieved with BOTH being done.

People of clear thought, we have to stop the obsession of obtaining useless information from entertainment devices.

We will not be able to appreciate the sky and the earth as miracles, until we become people who can get away from useless information. Only then, when we receive beneficial information, it will actually impact us.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْءَانَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Surah Muhammad [47: 24] : Don't they **think deeply** about Quran or their **hearts** locked up?

We will not be able to think about the sky and the earth as mentioned in various verses in the Quran if our hearts are busy with useless information on the internet, on the TV.

If our heart are sound, when we look up to the sky, we will realize that *“Master, You did not create this without purpose.”*

For example in Surah-Ankabut, Allah mentioned, *“Didn’t they travel around all over the earth and didn’t they take a good look at how creation began?”*

Which tafseer do we need to look up to understand this verse?

The tafseer that we need is to really **go and figure out** how creation began. Travel, and reflect.

In Surah An-Naml, verse 44 about Solomon and the Queen. She stepped on the glass and accepted Islam. The verse of the Quran forces us to see the history – we should explore it.

One of the Quranic verses, *“Human being loves to rush”*. In traffic, we can’t wait for the red light to turn green. We can’t wait for the plane to start boarding. When this eBook is going to be over.

In Surah Al-A’raf, verse 179, Allah specifically mentioned the cows. Other animals when they are close to danger, they will react. They run away from it. But cow does nothing. It doesn’t move.

People that keep their minds numb are the people that keep themselves busy with music, movies, video games, drugs and alcohol. They keep themselves busy, they keep their minds numb until they could not see the world around them.

'Ula-ika kal-an'am' – they are like cattle. They don't even realize the danger around them. They don't even realize what's happening.

We try to listen to lectures, we try to learn the Quran, but on the same we are also obsessed with entertainment.

If we eat an apple because we want to be healthy, and on the same time we eat a lot of junk food – Will that apple undo all the damage that comes from the junk food?

If we become people that reflect on the Quran, if we can deeply, in meaningful way reflect on the Quran, then we will have the insights. We will have the drive to want to take the best out of this world and use it to make the world a better place.

There's no such thing as "I'm bored. I don't know what to do," only and only if we become people of mission; the one that realize what our life purpose is.

By remembering Allah, hearts become satisfied. Do we remember God while we pray?

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

Ar-Ra'd [13: 28] : Those who have faith and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah- truly **it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find rest.**

Source:

[Nouman Ali Khan – Foundation of Faith](#)

“It’s your road, and yours alone, others may walk it with you, but no one can walk it for you.”

- Rumi

Contact

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email me at write@mins.my

Thank you for reading.

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who might benefit from this.

Resources

For translation/proofreading services,
you can reach out to Atiqah Nazir via email
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She's a self-proclaimed newly found hermit
who rather enjoy working in the background
and not big on social media but still up
for good translation/proofreading projects